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F O R T U N E S W A S H E D A W A Y

"WILDLIFE CONSERVATION"

Broadcast No. 33 in a series
of discussions of soil con-
servation in the Ohio Valley.

WLW, Cincinnati

December 10, 1938 6:15-6:30 p.m.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
Dayton, Ohio

SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

The Cumberland River follows a tortuous trail, rising in the rugged mountains of eastern Kentucky, twisting and winding through middle Tennessee, dipping north through fertile Kentucky farmlands, to join the Ohio River near Paducah. A little over a hundred years ago, the Valley of the Cumberland was one broad ribbon of woods and cane and grass, filled with buffalo, elk, deer, wolves, foxes, panthers. Into this pristine wilderness came Andrew Newman, with his wife Abigail, his son Thomas...

SOUND: Two horses walking slowly through tall grass.

NEWMAN (whispering)

Wait! Quiet, now.

SOUND: Horses stop. Pause. Rifle shot.

THOMAS

Got 'im, father!

NEWMAN

Come on!

SOUND: Horses force way through tall grass, then stop, and men alight.

THOMAS

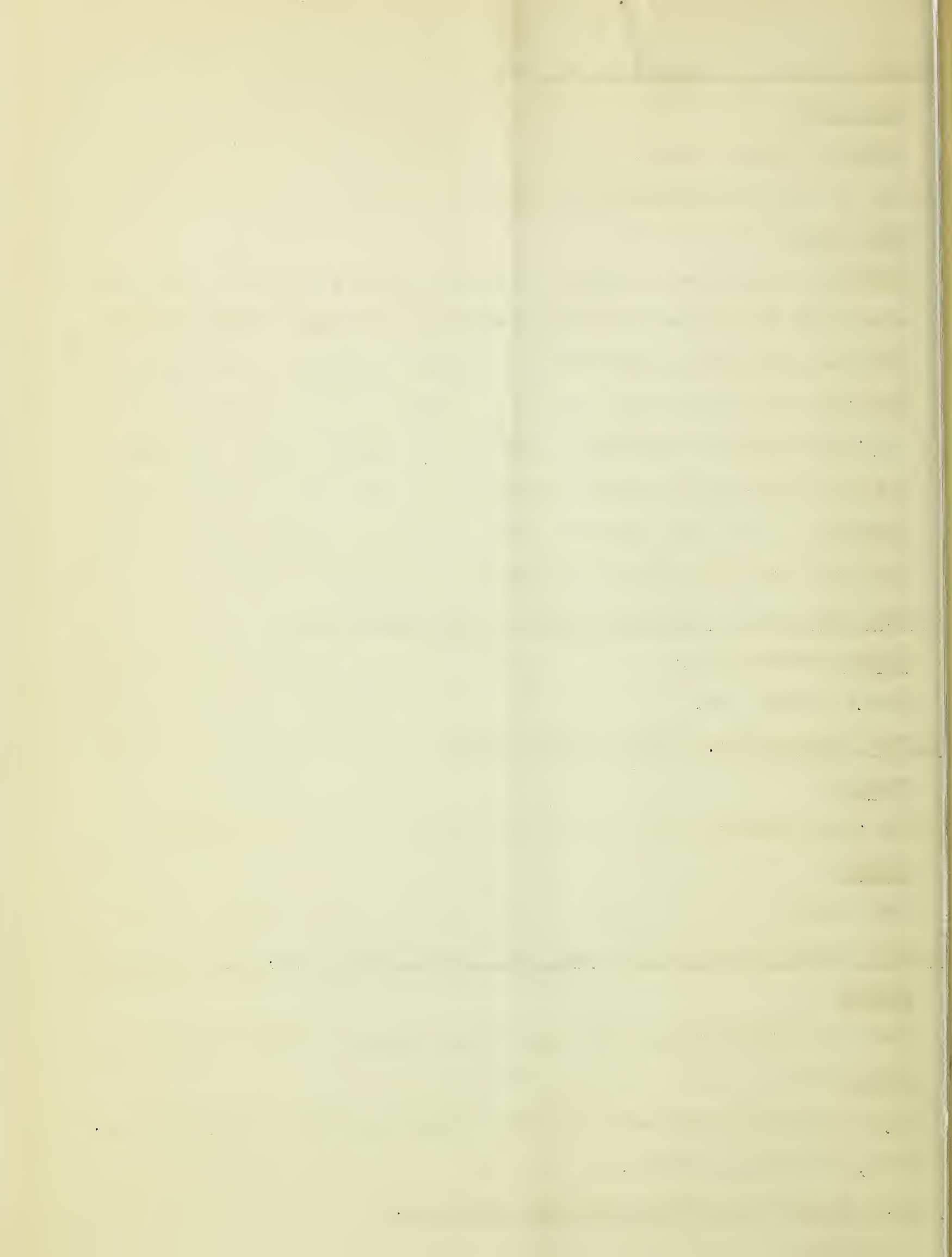
Isn't he a big fellow! How much do you suppose he'll weigh?

NEWMAN

Oh, a deer like that will run three hundred, three fifty, perhaps.

Well, let's get to work.

SOUND: Deer being skinned through following....



THOMAS

We'll have to hurry if we get another one today, father.

NEWMAN

Oh, we'll get another, all right. Haven't missed getting two a day this week, have we?

THOMAS

No, we haven't. It's powerful slow going in this barren grass, though. Tall as your head.

NEWMAN

So much the better. Where the grass is tall, and the woods are thick, you'll find the wild game.

THOMAS

But isn't it remarkable that the deer are so plentiful?

NEWMAN

Nothing remarkable about it at all. There's plenty of deer--and thank heaven for them. A few more deer hams sold, and we'll have the farm paid for. All right, tie him up there, and let's be on our way.

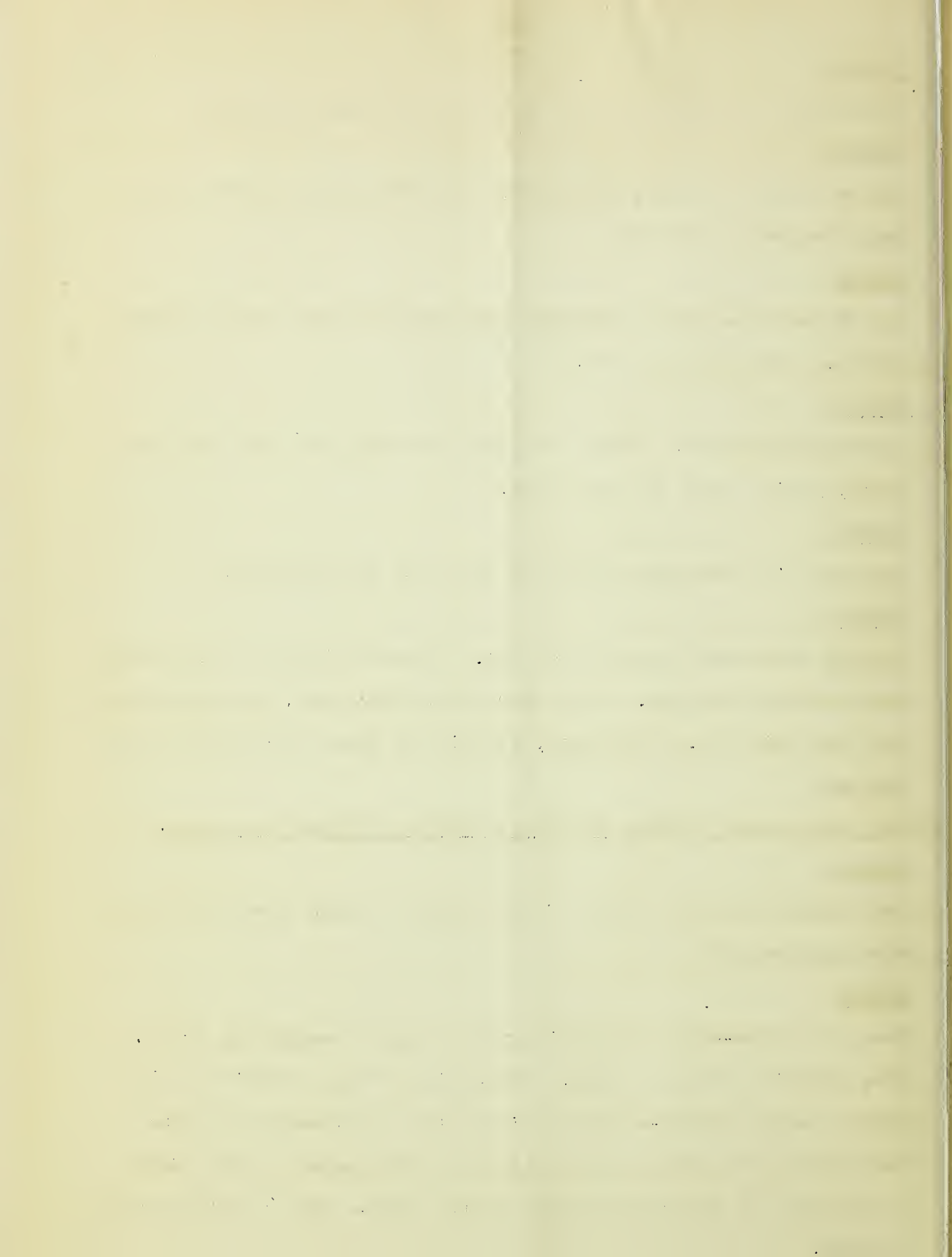
SOUND: They mount horses, and start walking through the grass.

THOMAS

But wouldn't it be a shame if the supply of game along the river ever petered out?

NEWMAN

Yes, of course--but that day'll never come to worry you or me. Yes, there's plenty of game. (Chuckling) Why, there's an old hunter named Russell--maybe you've heard of him--he's so dim-sighted that he has to tie a piece of white paper to the muzzle of his gun, to direct his sight at the game. Yet he kills plenty of deer.



ORGAN: THE HUNTER'S CHORUS.

SOUND: Furious barking of dogs and growling of wolves, and squealing of pigs, in distance.

THOMAS

What's that?

NEWMAN

It's wolves! They're after the pigs! Come on!

SOUND: Horses galloping.

SOUND: Two rifles fired in rapid order.

SOUND: Men alight.

ABIGAIL

Oh, Andrew! I'm so glad you're here!

NEWMAN

Are you all right, Abby?

ABIGAIL

Yes, I'm all right, but I had a hard time keeping the wolves away from the pigs. See, they killed one of them.

NEWMAN

Thank goodness you're all right. We'll have to leave one of the guns with you after this. Come on into the cabin (fading).

ORGAN: (Brief bridge)

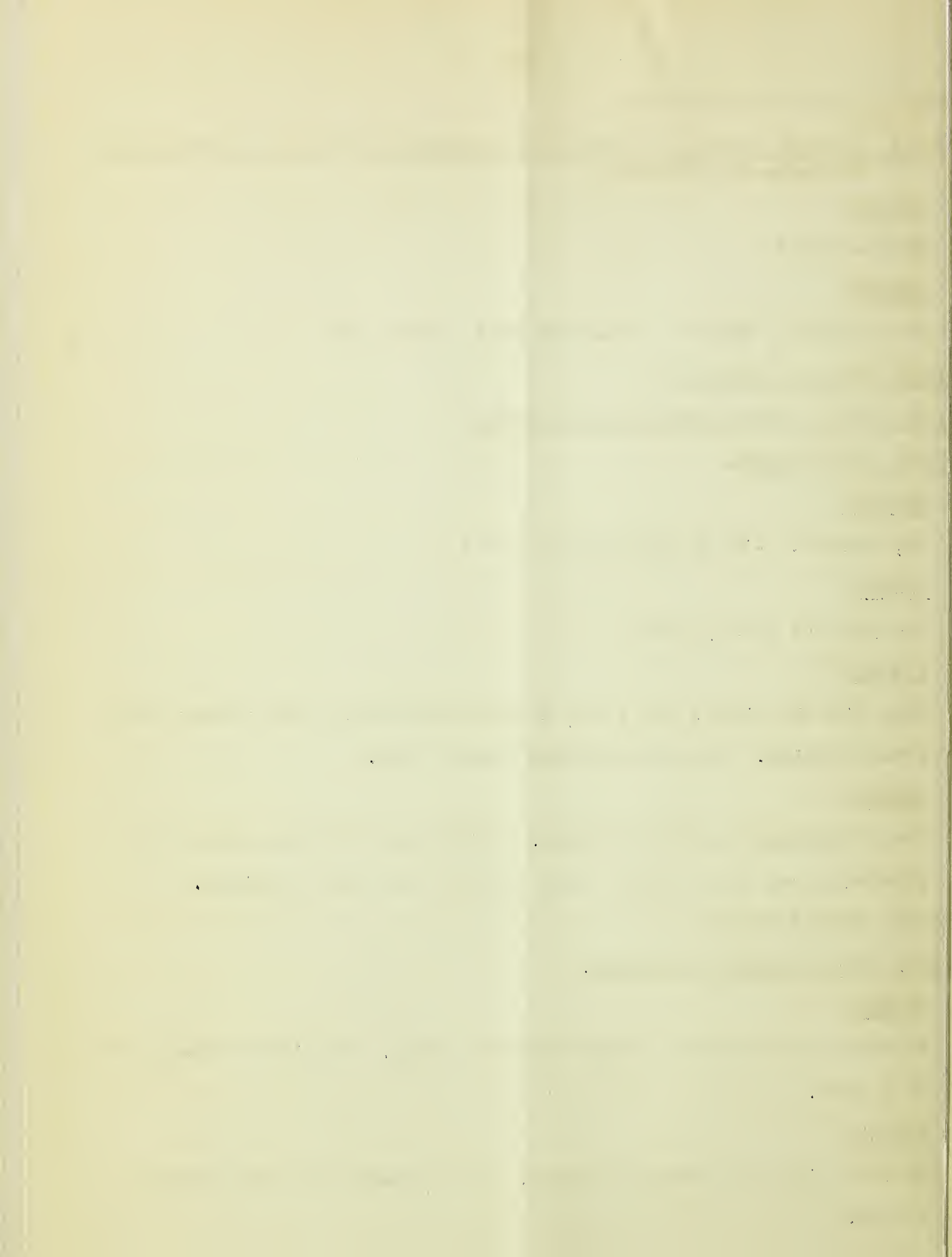
SOUND: Meat frying in skillet.

THOMAS

Be sure you fry some of that "melt," mother. That's the best part of a deer.

ABIGAIL

Now, you just be patient, Thomas. You'll have more than enough to eat.



NEWMAN

You may like the "melt," son, but to me, the hams are the most precious of all. Just think, we've practically paid for this farm with nothing but deer hams, and we've been here such a short time.

ABIGAIL

When do you expect to see Major Ewell again, Andrew?

NEWMAN

That boat from New Orleans ought to be at Paducah any week, now. You know, we had a mighty good load sent down the river last time.

ABIGAIL

Yes, how well I know it. I've been tying those skins to the cabin until I see them in my sleep. Chinking and daubing, tying skins... Oh, well, it's all in the day's work.

ORGAN: CABIN IN THE PINES.

SOUND: Overshot wheel of grist mill turning.

SOUND: Horse trots up, stops, man alights.

MAJOR EWELL

Ah, good morning, Andrew Newman! I've been expecting you.

NEWMAN

Yes, and I'm mighty glad to be here, Major. I suppose you heard the boat was in?

MAJOR EWELL

Yes, that's why I was expecting you. And you have the money? Not that I was needing it, but I know how anxious you were to make the final payment.

NEWMAN

Yes, and there it is!



SOUND: Small bag of coins tossed on table.

MAJOR EWELL

And now the farm is yours! And it's a right good farm, if I do say so. And you must admit that the price was a good one.

NEWMAN

Yes, 25 cents an acre is not too much. Still, I killed many a deer before I raised the price. And lately, the deer seem to be disappearing.

MAJOR EWELL

Do you want to know why? Do you want to know why I built this grist mill?

NEWMAN

Well, I....

MAJOR EWELL

I'll tell you why. All of this vast land that I received for my Revolutionary War services--what good was it to me? I am too old to farm. But I sold it to you, and to your friends...

NEWMAN

And we were right glad to get it.

MAJOR EWELL

But now the land is undergoing a change--a change caused by your own farming operations. The cover is being destroyed--and the game is going. Why, I remember the days when passenger pigeons were so numerous that, when they lit in the trees, the limbs would break. Where are they now?

NEWMAN

I'll admit, Major Ewell, they are not so plentiful as they were.



MAJOR EWELL

And where are the buffalo? And the deer? Oh, yes, many of them were killed by hunters, just as you have killed them day after day. But your hunting has not driven them away! It's **your** plow that has killed off the wild game! This was hunting ground once. But now, it's corn land--corn land! And as long as you keep the soil productive and fertile, and as long as you care for the land, this grist mill will sing and turn merrily and grind your corn and your neighbor's corn. But if you don't keep the soil fertile, the hillsides will wash away, and your corn will drive you from the land, just as you have driven away the deer--and this old mill will crumble, and fall into decay, and be no more.

ORGAN: DOWN BY THE OLD MILL STREAM.

ANNOUNCER

Wildlife conservation has been known and practiced for hundreds of years. Ghendis Khan, who ruled over most of Asia centuries ago, conserved wildlife even to the extent of sentencing to death those who killed birds that he liked to hunt with falcons. Wildlife has been preserved by the wealthy and the rulers of nations in every period covered by written history. But over much of these United States, the game is gone. Hillsides once covered with hickory and with mountain laurel are barren, splotched and carved by gullies. Vast prairies once covered with waving grasses are little more than shifting deserts--and the game is gone.

ORGAN: DOWN BY THE OLD MILL STREAM.



ANNOUNCER

This story of pioneer days in McGracken County, Kentucky, came from the Dayton office of the Soil Conservation Service, and now we turn to that office, and to Gene Charles.

CHARLES

Thank you, _____. Now, I'd like to continue with a discussion about just how wildlife conservation and soil conservation go hand in hand. But before we do that, I want to announce that the U. S. Department of Agriculture has published several regional bulletins which should be mighty helpful to farmers wanting to control their soil losses.

ANNOUNCER

And by regional bulletins you mean...

CHARLES

....bulletins that are localized enough to describe conditions and remedies in some detail. Now, here in the Corn Belt, we have "Conserving Corn Belt Soil." For farmers down in the South, there's "Soil Defense in the South." Do you get the idea?

ANNOUNCER

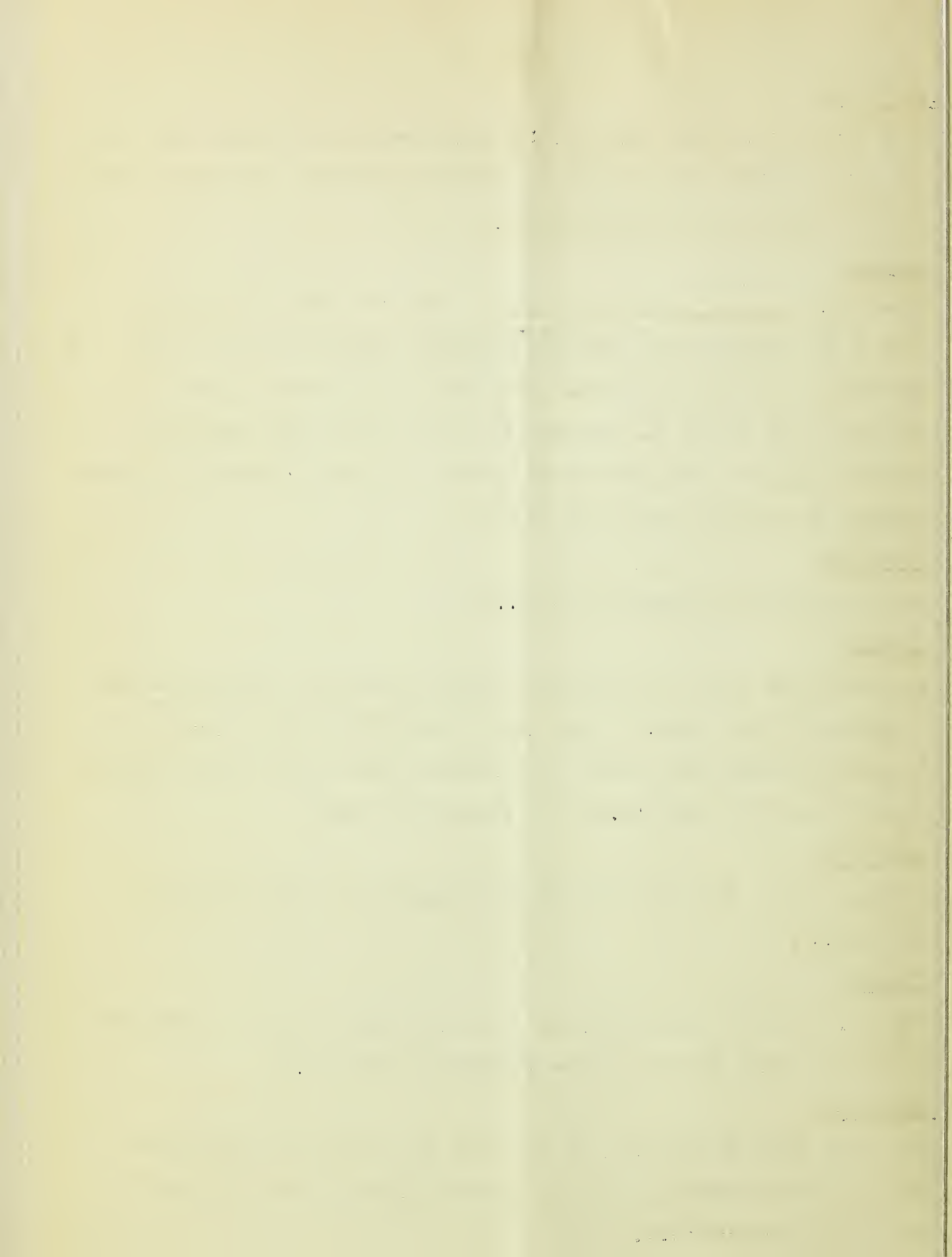
I think I do. Then for farmers in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New York...

CHARLES

"Soil Defense in the Northeast." And for those along the Atlantic seaboard, "Soil Defense in the Piedmont," and so on.

ANNOUNCER

And that gives me my cue. If you want one of the new bulletins telling how to control soil and moisture losses, drop a letter or a penny postcard to...



CHARLES

Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio.

ANNOUNCER

I'll repeat that. Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio.

CHARLES

All right, thank you, _____, and I just want to add one final word: you who get copies of these new bulletins will certainly be in for an agreeable surprise. Now, let's explore this wildlife conservation question a bit more. Charles Dambach is a biologist from the Dayton office of the Soil Conservation Service, and he's had a lot of experience along this line. Charley, suppose you tell us just how the soil conservation program and wildlife conservation go together.

DAMBACH

Well, Gene, first of all, for erosion control purposes it's extremely important that crops be fitted to the "lay of the land," so to speak.

CHARLES

You mean, clean-tilled crops like corn should be confined as much as possible to the more nearly level parts of the farm. Steep areas tending to erode easily should be placed in hay or grass, or in some cases, trees.

DAMBACH

That's the idea. An erosion control program on a farm generally means a reduction in clean-tilled crops and an increase in hay, grass, and timber. This makes for a distinct improvement in the environment for wildlife. But let's consider an actual case.



CHARLES

All right, and as we do that, let's get Forrest Durand to join us. Forrest, of course, is the project biologist of the Soil Conservation Service from Springfield, Tennessee. Forrest, suppose you pitch in and help us.

DURAND

All right, Gene, I'm ready, willing, and I hope, able.

CHARLES

Now, suppose we go down the line with some of the practices recommended for this region...

DAMBACH

....that's a good idea. That way, we can bring in the general regional program, and at the same time give some specific examples.

CHARLES

First, the use of good crop rotations. Charley?

DAMBACH

Good rotations provide variety in food and cover, and are a great improvement over the single-crop farming that has been common in many of our larger agricultural areas. And good rotations maintain soil fertility. It may surprise you, but the more fertile agricultural areas are capable of supporting a larger number of wildlife than poor waste areas.

CHARLES

That is a little surprising, but it sounds logical--when you stop to think about it. And now, Forrest--strip cropping.



DURAND

Contour strip cropping is valuable for wildlife because it provides what biologists call the "maximum amount of edge"--that is, the greatest length of border line between one type of vegetation and another. Wildlife, as every outdoor man knows, thrives best where there is a mixture of plant species on the edge of woods or fields. Dambach has made some studies along that line, I believe.

DAMBACH

I wouldn't call them studies, but we did pick out ten farms selected at random in the northeastern United States. We found that, after soil conservation practices had been put into effect, the increase in "edge" amounted to more than 120,000 feet.

CHARLES

And that means better conditions for wildlife, Well, now, another soil-saving device that is widely used is the broad-base terrace. But I'm afraid I can't see just how terracing benefits wildlife.

DURAND

Well, terraces and diversion ditches have no direct effect on wildlife, but the indirect effect is the general improvement of wildlife conditions. Insofar as they reduce silting in lakes and streams and reduce flood hazards, terraces aid in the maintenance of existing wildlife habitats.

CHARLES

And next, gully control.

DURAND

There's nothing indirect about that. Gullies can be controlled through proper use of vegetation, using plants which grow nearby. Bare gullies support little animal life, but gullies treated with vegetation often provide a haven for most kinds of farm wildlife.



CHARLES

Well, I don't think we need run through the rest of the methods. It goes without saying, that fencing out woodlands to protect them from grazing greatly improves wildlife conditions in timbered areas.

DAMBACH

Yes, I know of one area in northeastern Ohio, for example, where a grazed woods supported a population of 45 pairs of breeding songbirds per 100 acres, while a protected woods next to it supported 189 pairs.

CHARLES

Then if I were a songbird, I'd head for the protected woodlands. But now, Forrest, do you have the situation well in hand down there at Springfield, Tennessee? Or just what is the situation?

DURAND

Well, Gene, the story of Andrew Newman, of McCracken County, Kentucky, is a good example of how wildlife can be driven away, and before we forget it, this story came to us from one of his relatives, Mr. A. L. Dorsey, of Springfield, and he has our sincere thanks. But now, in just a few words, let me tell you about one of our cooperators, Mr. J. G. Clinard.

CHARLES

Fine, you go right ahead.



DURAND

I'll be brief. Mr. Clinard realizes the value of wildlife on the farm. He found that restocking didn't increase the birds normally found on his land. But under his cooperative agreement with the Service, he's planting eroded and unprotected areas with herbaceous and woody species that furnish wildlife with suitable food and cover. He's made plantings along the banks of a stream, and in odd corners on the farm. And, well, I wish I could explain his entire farm plan, because it's certainly an excellent one for controlling erosion and encouraging wildlife.

CHARLES

Summing up, then: Erosion is controlled primarily through the proper use of vegetation. There are certain areas on nearly every farm that present an erosion problem. Many of those areas can best be controlled by the use of plants--which will at the same time provide food and cover for wildlife. And now, thanks to you, Charles Dambach and Forrest Durand. And next week, we want to tell you about Newt Clark, who farms deep in the hills of East Tennessee.

SOUND: Door opened and slammed.

WIFE

Oh, Harold, the baby said the cutest thing today.

HUSBAND (hurriedly)

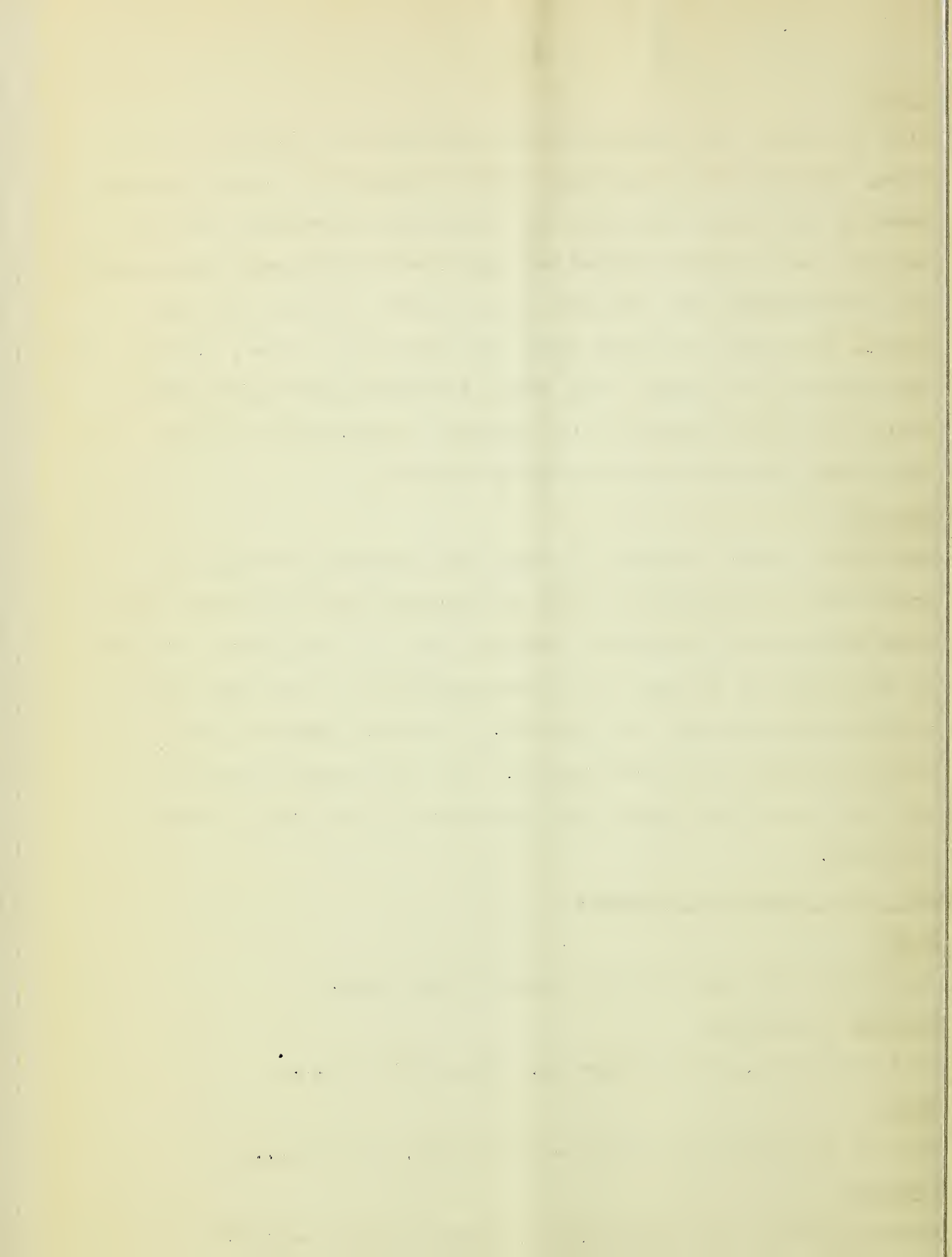
Don't bother me, don't bother me. Now, let's see....

WIFE

Oh, but you should have heard what he said. We were...

HUSBAND

Haven't time to talk about it now. Where's that postcard?



WIFE

Harold, what in the world are you so excited about?

HUSBAND

If you'll just listen to this next announcement by _____,
you'll find out.

ANNOUNCER

Copies of the latest bulletins on soil erosion prevention may be
secured by writing to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio. But remember,
the supply is limited. Next week, Mountain Farming.

SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away is a studio presentation of the agriculture
department of the Nation's Station.

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